

Message Text

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51 42

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OPR-02 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 INRE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 SY-05 USSS-00 SCCT-01 A-01 CCO-00

SCS-03 SCA-01 AID-05 EB-07 FAA-00 DOTE-00 IO-10 OC-05

OMB-01 NEAE-00 /103 W

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O R 031447Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5099

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8420

DEPT FOR WLG

STUTTGART FOR ELG

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, LE, PLO

SUBJECT: BEIRUT BEGINS TO DIG OUT IN NEAR CALM CONDITIONS

REF: BEIRUT 8382

1. KARAME GOVT CONTINUES ENJOY SUCCESS IN POURING SOOTHING BALM ON FRAYED NERVES OF LEBANESE CITIZENRY. NIGHT OF JULY 2/3 PASSED WITH INCIDENTS CONFINED TO ISOLATED SNIPING AND LIMITED ACTIVITY BY CAPITAL'S PERIPETETIC BOMBERS. PAPERS THIS MORNING CARRY MUCH REDUCED LIST ON INCIDENTS, PRIMARILY EXPLOSIONS, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE IN HAMRA AREA. LEBANESE LIAISON CENTER HAS ANNOUNCED SECURE CONDITIONS IN ALL PARTS OF CITY WITH EXCEPTION OF AIN RUMANNEH/SHIAH AND INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE EVENING JULY 2 THAT SECURITY FORCES WOULD CONCENTRATE TODAY ON ELIMINATING LAST "POCKETS" OF FIGHTING.

2. SOURCE, WHO WAS WITH SECURITY FORCES AND PALESTINIANS OF JOINT GOL/PLO PATROLS, HAS INFORMED US THAT SECURITY FORCES ARE PRESENT IN BOTH SHIAH AND AIN RUMANNEH AS OF 1300 LOCAL TODAY. ACCORDING THIS FIRST-HAND REPORT, SOME DESULTORY SNI-PING CONTINUES BUT FORCES, APPROACHING SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM FURN ASH-SHUBAK AND SHIAH SIDES HAVE EXCELLENT RADIO CONTACTS AND ARE COORDINATING OPERATIONS TO ROOT OUT RECALCITRANT TROUBLE-MAKERS. PLO REPS ARE COOPERATING CLOSELY WITH GOL SECURITY FORCES SWEEPING SHIAH; WE DO NOT RPT NOT KNOW WHETHER PHALANGE OFFICIALS ACCOMPANYING THOSE IN AIN RUMANNEH. DESPITE THIS PROGRESS, THERE ARE INSISTENT, BUT UNCONFIRMED, RUMORS THAT OLD DAMASCUS ROAD THROUGH CHRISTIAN-DOMINATED FURN ASH-SHUBAK HAS BEEN DECLARED UNSAFE. IN GENERAL, HOW-EVER, SECURITY FORCES, WHICH HAVE BEEN MUCH IN EVIDENCE LAST NIGHT AND TODAY IN STRENGTH AND SUPPORTED BY ARMOR (SOME OF WHICH LOANED BY LEBANESE ARMY), APPEAR TO HAVE SECURITY SITUA-TION WELL IN HAND FOR NOW.

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3. GOL HAS DIRECTED MUCH OF ITS EFFORT SINCE JULY 2 TO TAMPING DOWN VIOLENT OUTBREAKS IN SOME OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. AFTER SEVERAL NIGHTS OF VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN TOWN OF TRIPOLI, CONDITIONS JULY 3 APPEAR MUCH IMPROVED AND REPS OF VARIOUS CONTENDING AFACIONS THERE HAVE MET WITH THE GOVERNOR TO AGREE TO ABIDE BY ACCORD ON CEASEFIRE REACHED BY GOL AND PLO JULY 1. CONFRONTATION BETWEEN SHIITE TRIBESMEN AND CHRISTIAN

VILLAGE (AL QAA) NEAR BAALBEK HAS BEEN EASED BY EFFORTS OF GOL AND IMAM MUSA SADR, BUT NOT BEFORE AS MANY AS TWELVE PERSONS (PRIMARILY CHRISTIANS) WERE KILLED YESTERDAY. GREEK CATHOLIC BISHOP OF BAALBEK-HERMEL (ELIAS ZOGHBI) HAS RESIGNED IN DISGUST AND IMAM MUSA HAS ASKED THAT HE RECONSIDER. INCIDENTS SUCH AS THIS THREATEN TO REVIVIFY CONFESSIONAL BITTERNESS AND COULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS IN OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY.

4. PRIMIN KARAME, WHO SPENT MUCH OF JULY 2 IN CONSULTATION WITH POLITICAL FIGURES (INCLUDING SUNNI MOSLEM NOTABLES WHO EXPRESSED THEIR SUPPORT FOR HIS GOVT), REPORTEDLY PASSED NIGHT AT MINISTRY OF DEFENSE OVERSEEING SECURITY OPERATIONS. IN REPORTING HIS ACTIVITIES ON LEBANESE RADIO AND TELEVISION LAST NIGHT, KARAME APPEALED FOR CALM AND ACCUSED ISRAELIS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ATTACKS AGAINST ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL SITES. WHILE LEBANESE, WHO CONTINUE TO AVOID STREETS OF THE CITY AFTER NIGHTFALL, PROBABLY SOMEWHAT RELIEVED TO SEE GOVT FIRMLY IN CONTROL, KARAME'S UNSCHEDULED TELEVISION APPEARANCE WAS HIS FIRST UNPOPULAR ACT SINCE OFFICIALLY ASSUMING OFFICE-- HE INTERRUPTED SHOWING OF KUNG FU SERIAL. KARAME IS CONVENING NEW CABINET FOR ITS FIRST MEETING JULY 3 TO BEGIN WORK ON PROGRAM WHICH IT WILL PRESENT TO PARLIAMENT, PROBABLY EARLY NEXT WEEK

5. SOCIALIST SPOKESMAN KAMAL JUMBLATT RETURNED EVENING JULY 2 FROM HIS VISIT TO EGYPT (CAIRO 6560). IN REMARKS TO PRESS, JUMBLATT RESERVED JUDGMENT ON NEW CABINET UNTIL AFTER MEETING OF LEFTISTS AT MAKESSED TODAY. JUMBLATT DID, HOWEVER, INDICATE THAT HE HAD NO RPT NO HAND IN SELECTING CABINET AND SAID KARAME HAD INFORMED HIM OF SLATE AS FAIT ACCOMPLI JUS BEFORE HIS (JUMBLATT'S) DEPARTURE FOR CAIRO. THIS ASSERTION, COMBINED WITH JUMBLATT'S INSISTENCE THAT HE AND HIS ALLIES WILL PRESS FOR REFORMING LEBANESE SYSTEM (I.E., CONFESSIONAL CHARACTER),
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HAVE PROMPTED MANY OBSERVERS TO CONCLUDE THAT JUMBLATT WILL MOVE TOWARD OPPOSITION, OUTWARDLY PEACEFUL, VIS-A-VIS THE KARAME GOVT.

6. AS LEBANESE CONTINUE TO EDGE TOWARD "NORMAL" ACTIVITIES, EXTENT OF ECONOMIC LOSS TO LEBANON FROM PAST THREE MONTHS OF TURMOIL IS OF INCREASING INTEREST. EMBASSY'S VERY TENTATIVE ESTIMATE OF LOSS AS RESULT OF EVENTS SINCE APRIL IS SHORTFALL OF LL 800 MILLION FROM PREVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED 1975 GNP RPT GNP OF LL 9.7 BILLION (I.E., GAIN OF ONLY LL 450. MILLION OVER 1974 GNP). LARGEST ACTUAL LOSS IS ESTIMATED 20 PER CENT DROP IN TOURISM. THIS ESTIMATE IS BASED ON 1973 EXPERIENCE AND INCOMPLETE DATA ON EFFECTS IN VARIOUS SECTORS AND, THEREFORE, IS NOT RPT NOT FOR PUBLICATION OR ATTRIBUTION. BEIRUT PORT RESUMED OPERATION JULY 3 WITH ABOUT 30 PER CENT OF NORMAL

LABOR FORCE. PORT CAPTAIN INFORMED EMBOFF THAT 127 SHIPS AT ANCHOR, OF WHICH 24 BEING WORKED JULY 3. FURTHER 38 VESSELS ARE REGISTERED BUT NOT YET ANCHORED.

7. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, ALL AMCITS (WITH EXCEPTION COL MORGAN) REMAIN SAFE. MORGAN CASE RECEIVED WIDE PRESS PLAY LOCALLY BASED PRIMARILY UPON REMARKS JULY 2 OF DEPT PRESS SPOKESMAN. BEIRUT AIRPORT REPORTS AIR TRAFFIC NORMAL WITH FAIRLY HEAVY PASSENGER LOAD OUTGOING AND QUITE LIGHT INCOMING. AIRPORT FUEL SITUATION SHOULD BE RESTORED TO NORMAL BY JULY 4. GODLEY

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